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Chapter 1



Light Side—Dark Side

The afternoon sun hovered just above the mountain as I picked my way down the rocky trail. I had just finished bandaging an old man with chronic diabetes who had a leg wound that wouldn't heal properly. Jock had no clue how old he was. He had previously lived in a cement hut with a thatch roof until it collapsed during one of the many hurricanes that batter the island of Haiti. Now he lived in a tiny back corner of someone else's house. The gloomy room had no windows and was barely big enough for his cot. While bandaging his leg, I had to stand outside on the crumbling front step while he sat on his sagging mattress.

With no family to care for him, Jock was at the mercy of the other people who lived in the compound. When the mission nurses came to bandage his leg, they often brought a gift of food or vitamins to add to his meager diet. Otherwise, he only ate if the people he lived with had enough to share with him.

But his circumstances did not leave him discouraged. Though his aged body was failing, his spirit was alive in God. I loved going there just to see Jock's bright smile. His contentment inspired me. And his songs! For an old man, he had a

remarkable voice. He sang from his heart, with tears trickling from closed eyes and one bony hand raised toward Heaven.

As I left his hut that day, my mind reechoed the words of his song: “I have confidence in my Jesus. I know that He will be with me always. I have nothing to fear. I have confidence in my Jesus.”

At the bottom of the hill was another small cluster of shabby houses. Even from the trail I noticed more activity than usual. Women scurried here and there, stirring large pots of rice. Men stood around talking and drinking cheap beer. From passing by so often on my visits to Jock, I had learned to know the children who lived there. I paused with a smile as they dashed into my open arms, shrieking with delight, their grimy hands clutching my skirt and mischievous grins dancing on their faces. “We are going to have a party! We are going to have a party!” they chorused.

“Really? What kind of party?” My eyes caught sight of a huge red flag flapping above the largest hut. A single word in white glitter jumped out at me from the center of the fabric—*Rah-Rah*, the native word for Satan worship.

“I don’t know, just a party. A spirit party!” shouted a little boy, sporting only a torn orange shirt.

“Yes, yes,” another girl added. “There will be lots of food and dancing. We have to go to bed early, but we peek through the window and watch sometimes.” She giggled, covering her mouth with her hand.

These dear children were so innocent in the face of such spiritual darkness. I shivered and rubbed my arms, thankful the sun was still shining.

I drifted to where two young girls chatted together. “*Bonswa*,” I said casually. “The children told me you are having a party?”

The girls studied me carefully. The taller girl squinted at

me as if her eyes could see right through me. “Yes, it’s a party all right,” she said. “We will sing and dance for the devil.”

I was shocked at her openness.

“We will eat food and thank the spirits for their protection. Maybe there will be a sacrifice.” She glanced at the sun and crossed her arms. “We won’t know until it is dark.”

The girl’s eyes looked eerie. Something seemed to dance in them, something other than a twinkle or a reflection of the setting sun. Suddenly a calm came over me. Putting my hand on her shoulder, I said, “My friend, you do not have to dance for the devil. Don’t you know that Jesus Christ can set you free?”

To my utter astonishment, the girl replied, “I know. But I have a demon dancing in my head. I must dance to please it. I must offer to the spirits so they don’t become angry and hurt me.”

“Well, why don’t you leave Satan behind and follow Jesus if you know devil worship is wrong?”

The girl’s eyes flashed and glared at me. She shook her head so hard the large silver discs on her ears danced. “Oh, but I can’t! If I forsake my demon and Satan completely, the demon will jump on me and hurt me. If I leave Satan worship, I would need to give Satan a big gift.” She dropped her voice. “Someone’s blood.”

“But Satan also had me in his grip before I was a Christian,” I replied. “I left Satan behind without giving him anything, because I owe him nothing.”

The girl shrugged off my hand and sighed in exasperation, as though wondering how a white girl could be so simple about such important things. “For me, it is not that easy. But you could do that because you were born in a Christian home. I was born with this demon in my head.”

I tried one more time. “All right, what if I were born into a home like yours and decided to become a Christian but didn’t give Satan any gift. Could I do that?”

She nodded. “Yes, you could do that. But you would have to do it in complete faith. If you have even a small doubt, the devil will devour you. I do not have enough faith to leave. This demon protects me. He is my life.” She leaned forward and pointed her finger right in my face. “Don’t walk alone after dark. The Haitian proverb says, ‘Curses don’t fear the night.’”

Before I could say more, she tugged her friend’s hand. They walked away and began flirting with a group of young men. The blaring, irregular beat of rah-rah music filled the air. Goose bumps rose on my arms, and I glanced at the sky. I would have to hurry to reach the mission before the sun set.

My sandals kicked up dust as I jogged the half mile to the mission house. The girl’s warning rang in my ears, “Don’t walk alone after dark.” My experience was limited, but I knew the Haitians considered nighttime the devil’s hour. Darkness hates the Light.

My heart was deeply burdened—young girls in such terrible bondage to Satan and his dark kingdom! But then there were people like Jock, living in obvious communion with the Lord. Two very real and very different worlds, a light side and a dark side.

Oh, Lord, I pray that more would see the Light and find deliverance through Christ.